


STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT IN WRITING AN ESSAY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received: April 12, 2021 Revised: April 15, 2021 Accepted: April 23, 2021 Published: December 25, 2021</p> <p>Keywords: Subject-verb agreement Writing test Descriptive essay Students' ability</p>	<p>This study aimed at finding out how the students' skills in using subject-verb agreement in writing essays. This research method is descriptive quantitative method. The research data was collected through the writing test as an instrument. The sample of this research was the fifth-semester students of English Education at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar. The sample was taken by using simple random sampling. Based on the analysis and discussion about this research, the researcher concluded that the students' ability to use the subject-verb agreement in the fifth semester students of English Education at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar was categorized into very good level with a score was 88.24. This value is obtained based on the results of the scores of all students that are divided into the number of students who are the samples of this study. From 35 students, there were 7 students whose mastery levels were excellent, 16 students gained a very good level, 8 students whose mastery levels were good, 3 students gained a good level, 1 student gained a fair level, and no student gained a poor level. Moreover, the last level is very poor and no student gained this level.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> 
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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the main language skills that the students should learn because it is one of the ways to communicate with other people. Writing is an activity where someone explains something or shares information about something with people in writing form (Hogue, 1996:2). It means in giving information to other people, the information must be

clear and able to be understood by the receiver of the information. From all of the main language skills, writing is one of the difficult skills that the students generally consider. Moreover, in writing, grammar is one of the important elements that should be learned and given attention well and carefully by the students.

“Grammar is a language rule where the word form is changed and it is also combining the words into the sentences which have a goal to deliver the meaning of a message (Mahda. et al, 2016)”. It means the grammar rules are very important to be mastered. Because without understanding the grammar of the language, a learner cannot make good and correct writing. Therefore, in English learning, grammar becomes an important thing to invent an understanding in using the language. Specifically, grammar determines a message from sentence structure which should be considered well by the students as the language user (Mahda. et al, 2016).

Students of university, especially English learners are supposed to learn grammar rules because they will always be given a task to write. Sometimes they are asked to write sentences, paragraphs, or even essays. Their writing should be good and correct grammatically. Good in writing means the sentences should follow or agree with the rules of grammar in making sentences. It is very suitable with their subject of writing so that they are easier to face the task when their lecturer asks them to write well (Nurjanah, 2017).

In making sentences well and correct grammatically, the students need to pay attention to the subject-verb agreement in every single sentence. Eastwood (1994) stated that subject-verb agreement is selecting the correct singular or plural verb after the subject. Besides, Pyle and Page state that the subject and verb in a sentence must agree in person and number (Pyle and page, 2002). The writer can conclude that if the subject is singular, so the verb is singular too, and if the subject is plural, so the verb is plural too.

Learning the Indonesian language is very different from learning the English language. In creating the sentences in Indonesia, the verbs are not changed even though the subject is singular or plural, even though it happens in the present time, past time, or even in the future time. In contrast, English verbs always depend on the subject and the time when an action happens (Ginanjari, 2015). As the statement that is stated by Rozakis (2003:32), he expresses that, by observing the verb form, the reader could find out: 1. some kinds of tenses namely, when the action is done in present time, in past time, or in future time; 2. A subject can be a person or non - person (who or what does the action); 3. Several subjects (how many subjects act the action), 4. Active or passive voice (the subject acts or is acted). Based on the discussion above, the English verbs in sentences are influenced by the subject, the number of subjects, and the time (tenses). Thus, the subject-verb agreement material is chosen to be the major focus in this research. (Orlove, 2004:271) states that the subject-verb agreement is the singular subject that is followed by the singular verb and the plural subject that is followed by the plural verb.

Based on the researcher's experience when the researcher got a chance to teach students in one of the classes which was in the first semester of the English Department at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar for about two months, the researcher gave material

about simple present tense and how to make the sentence correctly. After all of the materials about the simple present tense had been given, the researcher tried to know the students' understanding by asking the students to make some sentences about simple present tense correctly which followed the rule of grammar that was explained before by the researcher. Then a result, the total of the students in that class was about 20 students, and the students who made sentences correctly were only 3 students, and other students were still incorrect in making sentences. Most of the students in that class were still incorrect in laying the verb after the subject. The students also could not differentiate what verb is correct for the singular subject and what verb which is correct for the plural subject. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the students were still confused about differentiating how to put the correct verb after the subject.

Another problem that has been found by Norhalimah (2016) entitled "The Subject-Verb Agreement Problems in Writing at the Eight Grades of the MTS An-Nur Palangkaraya" concluded that students had problems in using the auxiliary verb namely, have and has, then, to be (is/am/are) and they were still confused about using verb for singular subject and plural subject and also the adjustments to be / verb in sentences. Then, another research about the problem of subject-verb agreement that has been found and explained in the journal of Suryo and Yustisia (2017) entitled "The students' ability in using subject-verb agreement in Senior High School" concluded that the students' ability in using the subject-verb agreement can be categorized into poor as 15 from 27 students who were in the class and they made an error (58%). From the statements that the researchers have mentioned, it could be concluded that the students are still confused about the using verb after the subject. The students also still do not master the rules of grammar well.

Because of some reasons above, the researcher is interested in researching subject-verb agreement. The researcher wants to research subject-verb agreement in a tense that has been studied by the fourth semester of the English Department at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar. The tense is simple present. Therefore, the researcher proposes research by the title: "Students' Ability in Using Subject-Verb Agreement in Writing an Essay by the Fifth-Semester Students of the English Department at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used descriptive quantitative research. According to Schreiber, descriptive studies simply describe some phenomenon using numbers to create a picture of a group or individual (Schreiber, 2011). In this research, the researcher researched the use of subject-verb agreement in students' essay writing. The population of this research was the fourth-semester students of the English Department at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar. The total population was 71 students. The 71 students were divided into two classes. A class consisted of 35 students, and B class consisted of 36 Students. Researcher used a simple random sampling technique. According to (Gay, et al, 2012: 131) Simple random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that

all individuals in a determined population have the same and independent opportunity to choose a sample. The researcher chose 35 students as the sample, where the researcher took half of the Students in each class because the students of the fourth semester of the English department at Alauddin state Islamic university of Makassar were divided into 2 classes. In this research, the researcher applied a writing test as the instrument. The writing test was writing a descriptive essay. A writing test was used to find out the students' ability in using subject-verb agreement in simple present tense of writing an essay. To collect the data, the researcher used some steps such as: (1) Researcher provided several topics to students. For the descriptive essay, the topics are Losari Beach, My Campus, My Hometown, My Friends, and My Favorite Singer (2) Researcher would allow students to choose one of the topics that have been given, (3) Researcher would ask students to write essays based on their chosen topic, (4) The researcher analyzed the writing test of the students.

Data analysis was carried out to describe the data by grouping them one by one according to the topic. The first data is the data from the writing of descriptive essays. The writing test is used to determine students' ability in using the subject-verb agreement of simple present tense in writing essays. Student scores are classified into the classifications of student abilities, namely very good, good, moderate, bad, and very bad. According to the review of the results of writing their essays.

1. Scoring the students' correct sentences at writing test by using this formula :

$$\text{Scoring} = \frac{\text{Total Correct Subject – verb agreement used}}{\text{Total Number of Subject – verb agreement used}} \times 100$$

(Depdiknas as cited in Hermawan, 2016)

2. Indicator

Table 1. The Students' Correct Sentences

No	Criteria	Score	Note
1.	Correct	1	The student's subject-verb agreement used is correct (the subject-verb agreement used follows the rules of the simple present tense)
2.	Incorrect	0	The student's subject-verb agreement used is incorrect (the subject-verb agreement used doesn't follow the rules of the simple present tense)

3. Scoring Classification of Students' Writing Achievement

Table 2, Scoring Classification of Students' Writing Achievement

NO	Interval Score	Classification
1.	96 - 100	Excellent
2.	86 - 95	Very good
3.	76 - 85	Good

4.	66 - 75	Fairly good
5.	56 - 65	Fair
6.	36 - 55	Poor
7.	0 - 35	Very poor

(Depdiknas as cited in Hermawan, 2016)

The researcher calculated the percentage of students who were categorized into some classifications level, namely Excellent, very good, good, fairly good, fair, poor, and very poor by the following formula:

$$p = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Note:

P: The percentage of students

f: frequency of students who were categorized into a classification level

n: Number of respondents

Mean score of the result (Sugiyono, 2007, p. 48)

$$\bar{X} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n}{n}$$

Note:

X = Average score

X₁, X₂, ..., X_n = 1st, 2nd, ..., data (scores)

n = data (number of students)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was aimed how the ability of the fifth-semester students in using subject-verb agreement of simple present tense in writing an essay. The result of this objective is presented in the research finding table below:

Table 3. Percentage of the Students' Level Mastery in the subject-verb agreement of simple present tense

Number	Classification	Number	Percentage
1.	Excellent (96 - 100)	7 Students	20 %
2.	Very Good (86 - 95)	16 Students	45.71 %
3.	Good (76 -85)	8 Students	22.86 %
4.	Fairly good (66 - 75)	3 Students	8.57 %
5.	Fair (56 - 65)	1 Student	2.86 %
6.	Poor (36 - 55)	0 Student	0 %
7.	Very poor (0 - 35)	0 Student	0 %
	Total :	35 Students	100 %

From the table above, the researcher got the result that there were 7 or (20%) students whose mastery level were excellent, 16 or (45.71 %) students gained a very good level, 8 or (22.86 %) students whose mastery level were good, 3 or (8.57 %) students gained a fairly good level, 1 or (2.86 %) student gained a fair level, no student gained a poor level. And the last level is very poor and no student gained this level.

Here are the examples of students' subject-verb agreement used for each level category:

1. Excellent level category

NR 27 got this category because this student made 12 subject-verb agreements used of the simple present in the writing test, namely:

All of the subject-verb agreements used above are correct because they follow the rules of simple present tense both verbal and nominal. This student's result was 100. The score "100" was categorized into excellent level with the scores are (96 - 100).

2. Very good level category

NR 18 got this category because this student made 16 subject-verb agreements used of the simple present tense in the writing test, namely:

From 16 subject-verb agreements used above, there were 14 correct subject-verb agreements used. This student's result was 87, 5. The score "87, 5" was categorized into very good level with the scores are (86 - 95).

3. Good level category

NR 15 got this category because this student made 16 subject-verb agreements used of the simple present tense in the writing test, namely:

From 16 subject-verb agreements used above, there were 13 correct subject-verb agreements used. This student's result was 81, 25. The score "81, 25" was categorized into good level with the scores are (76 - 85).

4. Fairly good level category

NR 11 got this category because this student made 15 subject-verb agreements used of the simple present in the writing test, namely:

From the 15 subject-verb agreements used above, there were 11 correct subject-verb agreements used. This student's result was 73.33. The score "73.33" was categorized into fairly good levels with the scores are (66 - 75).

5. Fair level category

NR 33 got this category because this student made 19 subject-verb agreements used of the simple present tense in the writing test, namely:

19 subject-verb agreements used above, there were 11 correct subject-verb agreements used. The student's result was 57.89. The score "57.89" was categorized into fair level with the scores are (56 - 65).

Table 4. Mean Score of The Students' Result

Total of students' scores	3088.42
Total number of students	35
$\bar{X} = \frac{3088.42}{35}$	
Mean Score	88.24

From the table above, the researcher concluded that the students' ability in using subject verb-agreement of the simple present tense in writing an essay in the fifth semester of the English Department at Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar was categorized into the very good level as the score is 88.24. This score was got based on the result of all the students' scores that were divided into 35 or the total of the students.

This research described the students' ability in using subject-verb agreement of simple present tense in writing an essay at the fifth-semester students of the English Department at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar. Based on the result of this research, the researcher would like to describe this research by using a table which is appended on the page appendix. The researcher found the scores based on the calculation that the researcher did.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion about this research, the researcher concluded that the students' ability in using subject-verb agreement for the fifth-semester students of English Education at the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar was categorized into very good level with a score is 88.24. This score was got based on the result of all the students' scores that were divided into the total of students who became the sample of this research. From 35 students, there were 7 students whose mastery levels were excellent, 16 students gained a very good level, 8 students whose mastery levels were good, 3 students gained a fairly good level, 1 student gained a fair level, no student gained a poor level. And the last level is very poor and no student gained this level

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